



LAKE CREEK LETTER

A Publication of the Lake Creek Historical Society

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FALL 2000



Corn meal made not so easy

Back in the days before Nintendo; way back before electricity; way, way back before Europeans showed up here, people ground corn by hand, using simple stone tools.

Children (and adults) got a taste of this and other Native American practices at a hands-on workshop Aug. 5. See page 6 for more details.

Historic Fund
dispute puts
future of LCHS
at risk _____ 2

Native American
workshop a big
hit with kids,
adults _____ 6

Tablecloth brings
community
together one
more time _____ 8

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County decides to divert historical fund revenues

In 1947, Jackson County voters passed a levy authorizing the county to collect 25 mils per \$1000 of assessed property taxes (25 cents on every \$1000). The purpose of that levy was for the county historic fund. For years the fund supported the Jackson County Historical Society. As communities grew and developed their own historical societies, museums and activities, the pot was divided and shared around the county, enabling local communities to preserve structures and artifacts and to become viable organizations.

Pioneer Hall is a prime example of how these funds have been used to help outlying communities.

The benefit of these funds goes beyond structures and artifacts, however. Local historical societies have the effect of building community. In Lake Creek, the sense of community that began to disappear as families operating small ranches were supplanted by employees of large-scale operations has seen a renaissance, and the Lake Creek Historical Society and the many activities it provides are a major factor.

Another benefit is economic; tourists are attracted to the covered bridges, museums and historic structures in outlying

areas. The recent Civil War reenactment is a good example of how this benefits the community. The Lake Creek Cafe had a banner day, and days like that are needed to keep a small business open and available during slower periods.

The money provided by the levy has value added through the thousands of volunteer hours, many unrecorded that are donated to historic preservation

In Lake Creek, the sense of community that began to disappear as families operating small ranches were supplanted by employees of large-scale operations has seen a renaissance, and the Lake Creek Historical Society and the many activities it provides are a major factor.

and education efforts throughout the county.

Another form of "volunteering" comes in the form of the people who, through their love of history, such as the people who do Civil War reenactments and the black powder era buffs, give their time and spend their own money on travel costs to share their knowledge with us.

While these assets may never show in a balance sheet or budget document, it's a fair

Continued on page 3

Legal remedy may be necessary

Continued from page 2

guess that, at \$7.50 per hour, volunteer services may equal or exceed the funds provided by the Historic Fund Levy.

All these benefits, and the future of the Lake Creek Historical Society, have been put at risk by what appears to be a major misunderstanding on the part of the Jackson County Commissioners. The commissioners have appropriated the County Historic Fund for purposes other than what it was intended. Despite pretty clear evidence that this is contrary to Oregon law, the commissioners persist in going after the fund. Apparently the temptation is too great; over the years, the 25-mil assessment has remained the same, but growth in property values has made the fund large enough to make it a target.

This action began in earnest during the budget process this spring. Commissioner Jack Walker proposed siphoning 50 percent of the fund into the county's general fund. When the historical community protested, that number was reduced to 28 percent and finally 14 percent.

But even a diversion of 1 percent of the funds is disturbing — and once the camel's nose is in the tent, as it were, you can be sure that the percentage of funds diverted will grow.

Other than wanting the money, the logic behind the Commissioners' move is difficult to understand. Oregon Revised Statutes and the Oregon Consti-

tution make it quite clear that when a levy is passed, funds collected under that levy must be used for what the voters approved.

"We are all upset," said Joyce Hailicka, president of the Jackson County Historical Museums Association. "The museums are suffering each in its own way."

While everybody loses when disputes go to court, Hailicka said that might be the only option. "We realize that if we don't want to lose our programs and quality, we may have to go through the legal system."

Should the county insist on

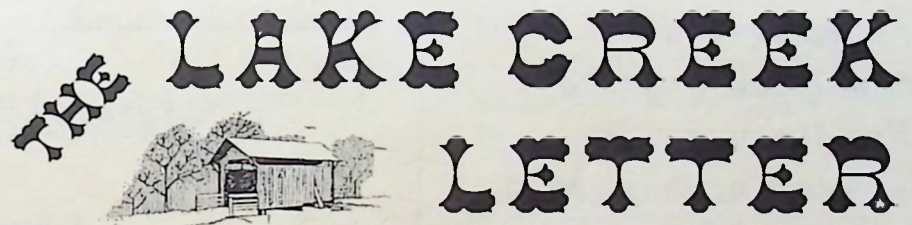
diverting levy funds, it appears that the historical societies are on pretty solid legal ground.

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Oregon law makes it quite clear that when a levy is passed, funds collected under that levy must be used for what the voters approved.

Back when Ballot Measure 50 was on the ballot, then-County Administrator Burke Raymond opined that the measure, which passed in 1997, would repeal all the continuing levies. That

Continued on page 4



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Outlying communities will suffer if historic fund levy monies are diverted

Continued from page 3

Opinion, which has turned out to be wrong, is apparently a fundamental part of the rationale for the county commissioners' position.

In a June 22 letter to the Oregon Department of Revenue, Robert Muir of the Oregon Attorney General's office said that "Measure 50 did not abolish ad valorem property tax levies," and that there is no question "but that the taxes generated using the authority of (the 1947 historical fund levy) are legally

The county's options would appear to be to collect the money and allocate it according to the language in the original levy, or not to collect the money, in which case nobody gets it. In the latter case, the commissioners' option would be to further drain the general fund by supporting historical societies or to cut them off with no funding.

dedicated 'for the purposes of creating [and funding] a county historical fund.' If the county levies taxes using the authority of (the 1947 levy), the county is

required to credit tax revenues from this levy to the county historical fund. ... Measure 50 does not conflict with and did not repeal the legal conditions and restrictions that applied to property tax levies that were authorized when Measure 50 took effect."

So the county's options would appear to be to collect the money and allocate it according to the language in the original levy, or not to collect the money, in which case nobody gets it. In the latter case, the commissioners' option would be to further drain the general fund by supporting historical societies or to cut them off with no funding.

It is understandable that the

county wants to fund critical areas such as public safety, and that roads and other infrastructure needs need more than they are getting.

But our heritage is important, as county residents recognized more than 50 years ago. Also important are the economic benefits of historical attractions in outlying communities. In looking for funding, the Jackson County Commissioners have placed themselves on questionable legal ground; they have contravened the wishes of the voters; and they have threatened the ability of outlying communities like Lake Creek to reap the economic and social benefits of an active historical society.

Calendar of Events

Monthly Meetings

Lake Creek Historical Society, third Wednesday, 6:30 p.m.

Lake Creek Rural Fire District, third Friday, 5 p.m.

Annual Events

December 2000: Holiday community potluck, (date TBA)

Winter 2000: Thomas Doty storytelling, (date TBA)

June 2001: Civil War Reenactment (date TBA)

Summer 2001: Annual Art Show (date TBA)

September 2001: Lake Creek Rural Fire District Annual Fundraiser BBQ, date TBA

Art Show is a hit again

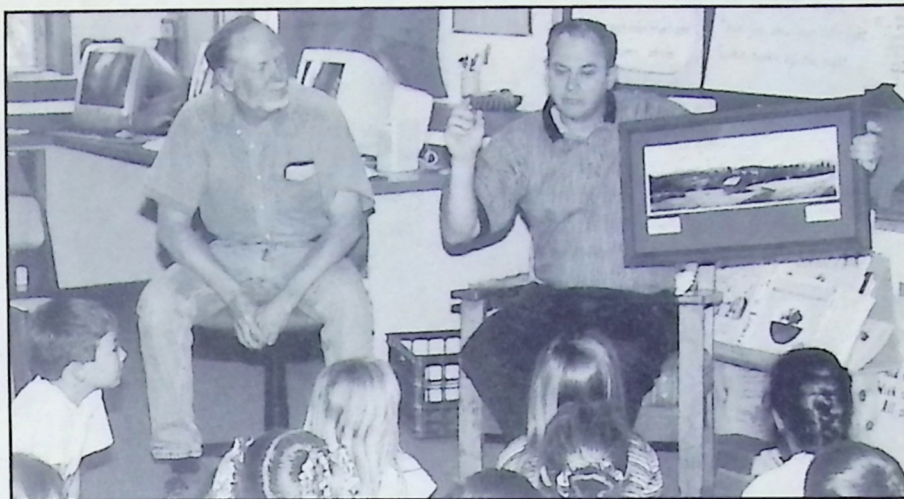
The annual Lake Creek Art Show, held Aug. 19-20, continued the tradition of featuring local artists, or artists with Lake Creek connections. As in past years, the show drew a large crowd, as a steady stream of visitors toured the exhibits in Pioneer Hall.

The featured artist was technical illustrator and artist Graham Wilmott, whose display included detailed drawings of old locomotives, fire engines and ships. Wilmott also brought prints and watercolors. Wilmott has lived in Lake Creek for three years.

The work of the late Kenny Kent, a western artist who moved to Lake Creek with his wife, Edna, in 1968, also was on display. The display included oils, watercolors and pencil and ink sketches.

Laney Mayfield Caspio, the daughter of Ed and Joan Mayfield, provided watercolors for the show. Laney, who now lives in Spartanburg, South Carolina, is a former Miss Oregon, and used her art as her talent in the competition.

Teresa Schleigh, who organized the first art show at Pioneer Hall, featured her new pencil drawing, "Faster Than the Speed of Sound." Schleigh's work has gained national recognition, and has been displayed at prestigious shows such as the Charles Russell Art Show in Great Falls, Mont. and the George Pippen Art Show in



Ron Walch, right, tells Lake Creek Learning Center students the history of schools in the Lake Creek area. To Ron's right is LCHS Board member Charles Bruce.

A connection with the past

The Lake Creek Learning Center is the first local school in a long time, but it has plenty of predecessors.

To ensure that students know about the rich history of schools in the Lake Creek area, Ron Walch, president of the LCHS Board of Directors, had enlargements made of the early schools of the Lake

Creek area.

He presented the prints, which he had matted and framed. On June 2 Ron and members of the LCHS Board presented the pictures to the students at the Lake Creek school.

Ron gave a brief history of the schools and told where they were located.

Prescott, Arizona.

Another Lake Creek resident, Kevin Nussbaum, whose great-grandparents, William and Willamina Nussbaum, settled here in the 1880s, displayed custom-made knives. Nussbaum, who taught himself the art of knife-making, lives on the family homestead.

Sue Kupillas, a former art teacher whose work has been on display at many Rogue Valley venues, provided some of her

most recent watercolors for the show.

The show also featured the work of younger Lake Creek artists, including 12-year-old Paul Mayhew, a self-taught, home-schooled artist who provided drawings of dinosaurs and Godzilla.

Lake Creek Learning Center students, who had come to Lake Creek on a field trip and did sketches and paintings, displayed their artwork at the show

Workshop for kids on Native American culture, crafts, is a hit with adults, too

On Saturday, August 5, the Lake Creek Historical Society sponsored a children's hands-on workshop for all ages — including adults — on Native American culture and crafts. More than 50 children and adults attended.

Activities began with stories from the Native West by Thomas Doty. Doty, who is a writer and poet as well as a performer and storyteller, is a diligent researcher and has spent time with different Native American groups such as the Tlingit in Alaska and Rogue River groups. Through his apprenticeship as a keeper of stories he has been entrusted with native artifacts, valuable books and recordings.

Doty blends story and performance, traditional myth and creative spirit. He describes storytelling as a living art, and that not until recently has it begun to be considered only for children. Doty, who will return to Pioneer Hall this winter, says his stories are equally informative and entertaining for adults.

"He was very entertaining and interesting to this group," said LCHS Marian Angele, acting executive director. "He told a story about how the Sun came to be through the help of Snake, about Bear that learned to fly like a swan (he became the Big Bear in the sky — he has many bear stories) and about the man who tried to bring his wife back from the home of the dead. He failed



Hands-on activities provided by the Jacksonville Children's Museum were popular.

as did Orpheus and other heroes of other cultures who made similar attempts."

Also available for the workshop was a hands-on exhibit from the Jacksonville Children's Museum. It included games, grinding stones, a digging tool, a drilling tool, a model plank house, pieces of tanned rabbit and deer hides, sample food items, sample trade/decoration items, sample basketry materials, books, maps, a resource book for teachers, a woven reed mat, and sample of

basket decoration with acorns.

"The kids enjoyed this exhibit, touching, holding, trying things because they weren't

Doty blends story and performance, traditional myth and creative spirit. He describes storytelling as a living art. He will return to Pioneer Hall this winter.

working with actual artifacts," noted Angele, who organized the event.

Outside Pioneer Hall, three teachers demonstrated crafts.

Continued on page 7

Native Americans share traditions of the past

Continued from page 6

Bert Emerine, a descendent of Pocahontas, taught how to make cattail mats. Although the samples were small, the children all quickly mastered the techniques, Angele said. "When they left they knew how to weave mats of various materials and sizes." Emerine brought samples of a variety of baskets she had made of different materials.

Bert's granddaughter, Becky Emery, brought a box of feathers from a variety of birds, and taught the children how to bead the shafts of these feathers. These beaded feathers could be used for decoration on clothing or in the hair, for prayer feathers or to attach to other objects for decoration.

Sparrowhawk, who makes flutes from a variety of woods, brought samples of flutes in various stages so the children would get the idea of how they were made. His samples included flutes he had made from various kinds of wood and some flutes that he had traded for, made from exotic woods like purple heart.

Sparrowhawk played songs for the children during the day, using different flutes so they could hear the various sounds they made, and learn what Native American songs sound like.

Sparrowhawk also taught the children how to make dream catchers, using cured willow bark circles letting the children chose the colors of string they



Sparrowhawk helps a young learner make a frame for a dream catcher.

wanted. He had turkey feathers for them to decorate the dream catchers when they were through.

As he taught them the craft, Sparrowhawk also talked about Native American thought, values, and had handouts on how their values differed from those of today.

In another area kids got to use grinding tools to make ground corn. "I think they learned it was more effective to pound it." Angele observed.

A friendship dance had been scheduled to end the day, but was moved up so children who had to leave could participate.

"Becky Emery, who does the Shawl Dance at many Powwows,

danced for us in the heat and sun," said Angele. "It was beautiful. We all joined hands together and did the friendship dance. Adults and children enjoyed this."

Many adults joined in as the

As he taught them the craft, Sparrowhawk also talked about Native American thought, values, and had handouts on how their values differed from those of today.

day went on, Angele said, and it was obviously a hit with the kids.

"Some of the children didn't want to leave, and had to be pulled away," she said. "Most of them felt very happy and tired by the end of the day."

Tablecloth reunion answers questions

A tablecloth found in a local home provided an intriguing mystery. Thanks to some good detective work the mystery of the tablecloth and its 255 signatures has been pretty well solved.

The cloth surfaced when, Bob and Ruth Braden, the new owners of the Ben and Margaret Gardener home discovered it in the attic. They were curious about the signatures and asked the Lake Creek Historical Society to unravel the story behind it.

At first it was a head-scratcher. Who were all those

people, and why were their names on a tablecloth? The Society published a picture in its newsletter and began putting bits of information together.

One of the people who did the most research — and had the most success finding answers — was Maxine Peile, a descendant of one of the first families to settle in the Lake Creek area.

"We think the friendship tablecloth was started by Margaret Gardener," she said. "Or it may have been started by a relative or friend and given to

Margaret and Ben as a wedding or shower gift."

The earliest date on the tablecloth is 1940, and people were still signing in the late '50s. The signatures, most of them embroidered, included men, women and children.

The signatures include approximately 14 from three generations of the Gardener family, Peile noted. Other signers were teachers from the Lake Creek and Brownsboro one-room schools and owners of the Lake

Continued on page 9



Gathering for a group photo at the Gardener quilt reunion Aug. 19 were: Front row, left to right, Maxine Eastman Jackson, Maxine Walch Peile, Bonnie Pech, Dorothy Damon Wadell, Joan Damon Campbell, Bonnie Millard Nutter, Mr. Nutter and Hala Marshall. (The last person in the row is unidentified).

Middle row, left to right: Thomas Wright, Sissy Pech, Brandy Hall, Nanette Grow Edmondson, Rene Gardener, Claude Waddell, Ben Gardener's daughter Emily??, Carolyn Uhrich, Helen Wolgamott, Ralph Wyant, Lisa Wyant, Bonnie Kettering, Vida Nichols Phillips, Betty Walch Payne and Herb Payne.

Back row, left to right: Terry Edmondson, Robert Peile, Charles Stanley, Ed Peile, (unidentified), Ben Gardener, (unidentified), Buck Walch, Grace Holman Armstrong, Dave Woolfolk, Linda Mallory, (unidentified), Phil Phillips and Clara Schleigh.

Tablecloth once again is the center of a

● Lake Creek community get-together

Continued from page 8

Creek and Brownsboro stores. Perhaps the most historically significant names are those of George & Mable Brown, descendants of the founders of Eagle Point and the family for which Brownsboro was named. ("It was where the Browns 'boro-ed' in," says Peile.)

Many of the signers were members of Home Extension, in which Margaret was very active.

While Ben and Margaret lived at Lake Creek more than 100 old-time Lake Creekers signed the tablecloth. After they moved to the Eagle Point area, along Highway 62 near the Junction with Highway 234 Junction, another 100-plus signatures were added from that area, north to Shady Cove, east to Butte Falls and from Medford, Camp White (now White City) and Central Point to the south and west.

"Ben had a welding shop near their home on Highway 62," Peile continues. "Many local cattlemen went to him to have branding irons made."

The Historical Society has the tablecloth framed and under glass, and it is displayed at Pioneer Hall.

"It made its way back home to Lake Creek where it was started 60 years before," notes Peile.

As a part of the Art Show, LCHS hosted a reunion for the tablecloth, inviting all of the

signers who could be located.

Below are some of the comments of attendees who gave oral histories during the reunion.

"I went through the first grade at the school here in Lake Creek. I first lived on the Nickel's ranch at Lake Creek. I took violin lessons and Victor (Gardener, Ben's brother) helped me a lot with that. I appreciated that. My brother was delivered by Mrs. Gardener. They were great neighbors. We moved away when I was through with the first grade so I could go to school down there."

—Grace Herman Armstrong

'It made its way back home to Lake Creek where it was started 60 years before.'

—Maxine Walch Peile

"We lived at Lake Creek up North Fork, and the Gardeners lived up above us. We met Margaret when she first came here. Of course we knew Ben before that and we used to walk up to her house and she'd walk down to ours. It's quite a distance. We had a lot of good times."

—Joann Boemen Campbell

"I didn't live at Lake Creek but I was born and raised in Eagle Point, and through the Grange and Extension and whatever our families were very close. They knew each other and that's about all I know, that they

were all friends."

—Helen Harnish Wolgamott

"Mrs. Gardener helped bring me into the world. My dad was there, of course. I went to school with Victor and I knew Lucy, but I moved away from home when I was about 20 years old and I think then that most of the old Gardeners, the old folk Gardeners, died, so I didn't know them."

—Vida Nickel Phillips

"The thing I remember about Gardeners is few years ago when we were visiting in the area Vida said she'd like to go see Victor. So we went up to their house and he just made us feel so much at home. He took us down to the basement and showed his workshop, pieces of various instruments that he had in progress and we enjoyed every minute of it. We spent the whole afternoon there and we have talked about that so many times. It's such a pleasure to be here with all the people who get together like this in a small community."

—Phil Phillips (Vida's husband)

"I used to live just a small ways to the South of where Margaret and Ben were. My husband had a welding shop and Margaret's husband had a welding shop. So Margaret and I were real good friends, always have been."

—Bertha Uhrich

Continued on page 10

Reunion attendees share memories

Continued from page 9

"I've probably known the Gardeners for 50-plus years. We have a coffee table in our home that was a burl cut off of Pech's ranch up at Lake Creek that is in our living room today. Ben made my first branding iron. I still have it. I don't know how many thousands of calves probably it's branded and it's still in good repair.

—Bill Woolfolk

"My mom signed the tablecloth, while we were sewing in the extension club in Eagle Point I think."

—Linda Mallory Woolfolk

"Everybody here would have called me Benny years ago but I kind of outgrew that, I think. I remember this tablecloth on many, many different occasions, showers that my mom gave, and it was out at the 25th wedding anniversary, just numerous times that it was out when people came to our home and they were asked to sign. There are still a few signatures on there that never got embroidered over, but that was kind of toward the end of my mom's life when she was not feeling very well.

"I remember some people that are here today. There are some that I do not. I remember the Woolfolks, and my wife looked over there at Buck Walch and said, 'Gosh I bet that guy was a character,' and when I realized who it was, I didn't (think she) realized how right she was. It's really nice to see everybody, and it's really nice that this is happening."

—Ben Gardener

"I was a playmate of Benny's as we

were growing up and the main thing I remember is as we'd get into mischief. I could go home and Benny would have to stick it out. And his mom was real good with a willow switch. She was a wonderful lady and even at that age I was really impressed that she made all of her own soap and did so much canning and they did so much stuff the old way. Even at that age I was very impressed.

—John Grow

"Artie Pech is my father and my great grandmother and great grandfather signed the Gardener tablecloth. It's been an amazing thing because not only have my friends signed it and the friends that I have now their ancestors signed it and it's just an ongoing family thing."

—Latasha Pech

"Ben was the (person who) kept our baler running all the time. He built Robert's branding iron but he doesn't want to tell you that. I don't have a (Gardener) branding iron. I wish I did."

—Ed Peile

"Actually I was in the Gardener family once. Well one of my uncles, Eric, was married to Rosella. Course everybody's gone now. But the Gardeners, Rafael and Bennett did a lot of blacksmith work for me and Bennett helped me put up two hay lines. He built I think about four branding irons because I was losing them about as fast as he was building them. I signed that tablecloth when I was about I guess about 20 years old. We were raising a big hay

shed on the Carter and Small up North Fork. Rafael and Bennett were the two main builders and that's where I signed the tablecloth. I have to say that those Gardeners boys were probably the best people to work with, the best I ever worked with.

—Buck Walch

"I want to thank some people. Bob and Ruth Braden are not here today but they're the ones who found this tablecloth and got it back to the Lake Creek Historical Society. Ruth also drove all the way from Gold hill where she now lives to bring the Gardener wedding picture so we could have it on display today. I'd like to thank Benny Gardener for bringing pictures of Gardeners that are on display today. Thanks to the Lake Creek Historical Society for framing this tablecloth and preserving the history it contains and for all things they've done to put on this reunion. Thanks to the Lake Creek Grange for letting us use their hall. Thanks to all of you who helped us with the information about these signatures and for answering the many questions I asked you. Without your help this would not be possible today. You made this happen. When I look at the tablecloth I know Ben and Margaret had many friends and when I look at all of you folks here today I know they had many lasting friends. Thank you for coming."

—Maxine Walch Peile

Civil War event overcomes ●competition, exceeds hopes

Despite competition from high school and college graduation ceremonies, Pioneer Days in Jacksonville and the Jackson County Fair Spring Show, the Civil War Reenactment in Lake Creek June 10-11 was a stirring success, drawing 250 visitors, and exceeding their expectations. Even cool weather with a day of drizzle failed to dampen the spirits of spectators and participants.

Organized by board member Jeannie Bruce, the event was far more than adults dressing up and playing soldier. Among the highlights:

—A replica of Lincoln's basket on view with a video that played several times during the day. And in a new addition to last year's presentation, two women in Civil War era dresses dramatized the different responses women from the North and South had to Lincoln's assassination.

—Bernie Rios and Joyce Hailicka read poetry about Lincoln and the reaction to his assassination. Rios combines the unlikely careers of poet and District Ranger for the Forest Service in Grants Pass. Hailicka is a poet, writer and artist who also does work for the Southern Oregon Historical Society and the Big Butte Historical Society.

—Of course no Civil War reenactment is complete without a battle, and Lake Creek resounded with the sounds of

skirmishes morning and afternoon both days, with cavalry, cannon shots, men fighting across the grass toward the split rail fence and tracking down snipers on the embankment behind the Lake Creek Cafe. Sometimes the South would win a skirmish and other times the Union forces would take the battle. One of the Yanks was a woman dressed as a man — and the woman in the skirmish was the great niece of a woman who had actually dressed as a man and fought in the Civil War.

—Style shows, with the women explaining all seven layers of their dresses, the whys and wherefores of all the different articles of clothing, kinds of sleeves, what got washed and how often. The men explained what materials their uniforms were made of, what the different colors meant, and the insignias. If you ever noticed that some of the gray uniforms were lighter in color, give yourself an "A" for keen observation skills. As the war ran on the South ran low on dye, so the uniforms went to the lighter gray.

—Demonstrations of soap

making, quilting and washing on a washboard.

And of course the event featured an encampment with tents.

The Old Time Fiddlers lent their substantial musical skills, adding to the festivities. The Lake Creek Cafe reported a brisk business.

"At one time a whole busload of people from the White City Domiciliary pulled up and piled off," said Marian Angele, acting LCHS executive director. "They spent most of the day there, and said it was wonderful."

The Pioneer Hall exhibit cases included a Yankee uniform and drum.

"We will have the same event next year," Angele said. "We hope to have better weather and fewer distractions from other programs by holding it on a weekend that has less competition."

Angele added that Civil War era dancing demonstrations and lessons, a barbecue, wagon rides, a medical wagon and a fur trapper are among the embellishments planned for the 2001 Civil War reenactment.

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